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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-12 /086 W
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R 231749Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9489
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 05563

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: GW, UR, PEPR
SUBJECT: CONTINUED SPECULATION ABOUT A BREZHNEV VISIT TO BONN

1. SPECULATION ABOUT THE POSSIBLE VISIT OF BREZHNEV TO BONN CONTINUES IN MOSCOW DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES. THE FRG AMBASSADOR HERE INFORMED US THAT THE SOVIET PRESS ATTACHE IN BONN MENTIONED TO WEST GERMANS THAT BREZHNEV MAY WISH TO COME TO BONN ABOUT APRIL 30 OR SOMETIME BETWEEN MAY 10 AND 20. BUT THEY HAVE, AT THE SAME TIME, BEEN PUT OFF BY MFA THIRD EUROPEAN DIVISION CHIEF A. P. BONDARENKO WITH THE COMMENT THAT THE SOVIETS WISH TO BE SURE THAT BREZHNEV'S HEALTH IS COMPLETELY RESTORED BEFORE RESCHEDULING THE VISIT. APART FROM THESE TWO REFERENCES, THE FRG EMBASSY HERE HAS NO OFFICIAL WORD FROM EITHER BONN OR THE SOVIETS.

2. ONE INDICATOR WHICH THE WEST GERMANS HERE HAVE BEEN LOOKING AT TO DEVINE THE PROXIMITY OF A VISIT HAS BEEN
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THE STATE OF PREPARATIONS FOR SEVERAL SENIOR SOVIET POLITICAL COMMENTATORS TO VISIT WEST GERMANY. THE FRG EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THESE JOURNALISTS WILL VISIT AHEAD OF BREZHNEV TO WRITE THE PREPARATORY PRESS PIECES WHICH USUALLY PRECEDE BREZHNEV'S TRAVELS. THEY ESTIMATE THAT BREZHNEV'S TRAVEL WOULD NOT START EARLIER THAN FOUR OR FIVE WEEKS AFTER THE JOURNALISTS DEPART MOSCOW. THE

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COMMENTATORS HAVE HAD VISAS SINCE JANUARY, BUT HAVE NOT LEFT FOR BONN YET.

3. MEANWHILE, THE SOVIET PRESS CONTINUES WITH THE NORMAL, WHICH IS TO SAY HEAVY, DOSE OF ANTI-GERMAN ARTICLES. NEO-NAZISM, MILITARISM, AND SOCIAL DISORDER OR DISCONTENT ARE REGULAR FARE IN PRAVDA AND THE OTHER CENTRAL PRESS ORGANS. SCHMIDT AND HIS GOVERNMENT CONTINUE TO GET OFF MORE LIGHTLY THAN THE CDU/CSU OPPOSITION, BUT GOVERNMENT POLICIES ARE CRITICIZED SHARPLY, EVEN WITHOUT DIRECT OR PERSONAL CRITICISM OF SCHMIDT AND HIS MINISTERS. AN EARLY INDICATOR THAT THE SOVIETS ARE AGAIN THINKING SERIOUSLY OF RESCHEDULING THE BREZHNEV VISIT WILL BE THE DIMUNITION OF SUCH ARTICLES IN NUMBER AND THEIR REPLACEMENT BY RELATIVELY FAVORABLE PRESS TREATMENT OF THE FRG. TOON

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